

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

VOL. III.

BOSTON, DECEMBER, 1894.

No. 7

THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

MONTHLY: 50 cents a year. Single copy, 5 cents.

Entered at the Boston, Mass., post-office as second
class mail matter, Nov. 14, 1892.

GEO. H. ELLIS, PRINTER, 141 FRANKLIN ST., BOSTON.

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CHRISTMAS SONG.

Calm on the listening ear of night
Come heaven's melodious strains,
Where wild Judea stretches forth
Her silver mantled plains,

Celestial choirs from courts above
Shed sacred glories there,
And angels with their sparkling lyres
Make music on the air.

The answering hills of Palestine
Send back the glad reply,
And greet from all their holy heights
The Day-spring from on high.

O'er the blue depths of Galilee
There comes a holier calm;
And Sharon waves, in solemn praise,
Her silent groves of palm.

"Glory to God!" The sounding skies
Loud with their anthems ring,
"Peace on the earth, good will to men
From heaven's Eternal King."

Light on thy hills, Jerusalem!
The Saviour now is born,
And bright on Bethlehem's joyous plains
Breaks the first Christmas morn.

—*E. H. Sears.*

THE UNSPEAKABLE GIFT.

Every good and perfect gift is from above;
but in Christianity, as in no other religion,
I find the direct hand of God,—the witness
to the world of God himself, the Divine
Presence on earth and among men. The
divineness of our religion differs from the
divineness of all other religions, not only in
degree, but in kind. They are all in the
order of nature. Christianity transcends
that order; and so it is written, "He spared
not his own Son," and "The Word was made
flesh and dwelt among us."

Christians may differ widely in explain-
ing the impression which their religion has
made upon them, and may not be in the
least agreed as to what a recognition of the
Divine Presence in the Founder of their re-
ligion must involve; but Christianity is not
Christianity save as it is the direct gift of
God,—his unspeakable gift, the blessed
mystery of descending, embodied, suffering,
dying, rising, ascending Love. It is more
to them than the human face turned heaven-
ward, bathed in the light of heaven, and
radiant with love and faith: it is the divine
countenance, as the sun shining in its
strength, and pouring down its brightness
upon the dark earth.

It makes the Giver himself very near and
very dear to us: we can easily regard him
as our Father and our Friend, as One hold-
ing personal relations with us, and speaking
to us as man to man. A practical religion
grows to great strength and beauty in the
light of this blessed persuasion. The stars
in their courses, the sun in his rising and
setting, the ever-changing face of Nature,
the flowers of the field, the face of man, the
wonderful order of Providence, reveal God
to us,—but how feebly and far off and
coldly in comparison with the light and the
nearness and the warmth of the gospel of
Jesus! His name shall be called Emmanuel,

God with us; for in him God finds us, and this God is our God forever and ever. Such a God is scarcely credible to philosophy. To the reasoner God is the Infinite, the Unchangeable, the Unapproachable. The man of faith indeed in all times, even in times of darkness, cherishes a different conception, loves and believes that he is loved, prays and believes that he is answered; but his faith needs and rejoices unspeakably in the evidences and the illustrations which Christianity supplies, and echoes from the very heart the words of Jesus, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." How continually upon the lips of the apostles was the phrase, "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"! Christianity has so enriched the world with prayer and trust that all wealth of this sort which was ours before seems poverty.

It is sometimes said that, though the gospel could not have been discovered by us, we are ready to assent to it directly it is revealed; but experience does not bear out the assertion. I do not refer to points about which Christians are divided. I have in mind the great affirmations in which all Christians are agreed, touching providence and prayer, and a conscious immortality, and the love which should go up to God and go out to man. To all these blessed persuasions the Christian has the witness of God: they are the contents of a revelation which he believes to be the gift of God. It is of immense practical importance, and the peculiar privilege of a Christian generation, not to be blown about by the winds of physical and metaphysical doctrine, to be permitted and encouraged and required to exercise a sweet and reposeful confidence in the gospel of Jesus as the very word of God,—to *begin* with this faith, entering the kingdom as a little child. In the end, but not at first, we shall know Christianity, point for point and doctrine for doctrine, to be altogether divine. We must be educated to this knowledge.

Let Christianity be trustingly embraced as the gift of God, a light in which we are to walk until our eyes can bear to look upon the unspeakable glory, a work which we are to do until we have come to love it, a hand which we must keep hold of amidst all temptations to linger and to wander; let it be our only wisdom to think as Christ

thought, to trust as Christ trusted, to pray as Christ prayed, to believe in the life everlasting as Christ believed,—and we shall presently hold as our own, and with a hand which no man can unclasp, all blessed religious persuasions. He that gathereth not with me scattereth. The Christian Church lives in the world to receive to her bosom every child of man,—to pray that the Heavenly Grace may keep and the Heavenly Arms enfold every soul.

It is the gift of God, this blessed religion of glad tidings. It came forth from the opened heavens, while the multitude of the heavenly host chanted the song of the Nativity. Signals of the Infinite Love accompanied it during all its wondrous way from the Manger to the Cross, and from the Cross to the Throne of Glory. It was the gift of God: "God so loved the world." And, as the hearts of men have opened in this blessed sun, they have said, each man to his fellow, "Brethren, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." Freely we have received, let us freely give. We are bought with a price, we are not our own; and more and more our religion has become a divine service, a sweet charity, a reconciliation of man to man, a love which beareth all things and never faileth, a diviner grace in the household, a new tenderness even in the heart of the mother, an infinite pity for those little ones who, in the midst of defilements and darkness and all miseries and temptations, plead for succor by the babe of Bethlehem, and press upon us afresh the Master's words: "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish." Let us open our hearts to this ever-descending love. It flows from an inexhaustible source. It shall be man's redemption. It shall fulfil the prophecy of the angelic birth-song, and heaven and earth shall join their voices to praise God for his unspeakable gift.—*Rufus Ellis.*

We have a friend who knows us better than we know ourselves, loves us better than we love ourselves, helps us when we cannot help ourselves, forgives us when we cannot forgive ourselves, and in our despair breathes round our heart the perfumed breath of a divine hope.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

THE STILL HOUR.

The shepherds sing; and shall I silent be?

My God, no hymn for thee?

My soul's a shepherd, too: a flock it feeds,

Of thoughts, and words, and deeds.

The pasture is thy word; the streams, thy grace,

Enriching all the place.

Shepherd and flock shall sing, and all my powers

Out-sing the daylight hours.

—George Herbert.

The true Christ, the Son of God, is no metaphysical doctrine, but a brother, a friend, a human being like ourselves, so full of divine light and love as to be the best manifestation we have of the Living God. Not Nature in all her majesty and beauty so reveals the Creator as the divine life of the Son of Man. Well might angels sing at his birth, Glory to God and peace to men!

The man Christ Jesus, this purely human brother of ours, became the Son of God by entire obedience and perfect trust. To him God was always Father and Friend; and, by living in that spirit, he helps us all to become also the sons of God.

He has no glory that he would not gladly share with us all. He desires no title of honor that he would not give to his brethren. This is his highest honor, to have desired no exclusive honor. Because he humbled himself, and became the servant of all men, God has highly exalted him. But he tells us that all who humble themselves, to do good, will be exalted also. The name which is above every name is the name he wishes us all to share with him. And, therefore, we may well keep Christmas with joy; for it is the birthday of our best friend, our dearest helper, our elder brother, the head of the household of mankind, who is most divine because he is so human, and who, more than any other, brings us near to the infinite love of God, and reveals God to us as our Father and Inspirer, "Path, Motive, Guide, Original, and End."

Our Christian faith is born with us, and gives us an unconscious and involuntary joy. We look at the world with a glad expectation. We look to the future with a happy hope, which we should not have if Jesus had not been born.—James Freeman Clarke.

THE BIBLE CLASS.

HEALING THE CENTURION'S SERVANT.—THE
STORM ON THE SEA OF GALILEE.

The story of the cure of the centurion's servant is told by two of the evangelists, Matthew and Luke. We cannot, in this case, turn to Mark as to a commentary; this should never be omitted, when possible, Mark giving *Peter's* account, and often adding lifelike touches, explaining and vitalizing the passage.

We find this account in Matthew viii. 5-13 and in Luke vii. 1-10. It is one of the precious stories which throw light on the mind and heart of Jesus; and the picturesque little scene is described in a way that gives us the sense of being present.

When we have once gained the clew to the central idea in the mind of Christ, all these passages shine with a new light.

If, as I believe, Jesus was filled with the earnest desire to welcome into the Jewish Church men of all nations,—Romans, Samaritans, Greeks,—he must have eagerly welcomed the opportunity of doing a kindness to a Roman, but more especially a Roman who, like many others, had been strongly influenced by the religion of the Jews, and in this case had gone so far as to build for them a synagogue, and, indeed, the very synagogue where Jesus was in the habit of preaching in Capernaum.

That it was the only synagogue in Capernaum appears from the construction of the language used. The phrase used in speaking of the "elders" who came to Jesus does not apply to the *elders of a synagogue*, but to the elders of the *town*; and in the revised version there is a slight but important change: "He loveth our nation, and himself built us *our* synagogue,"—not a synagogue, as in the old version. From this expression we may infer that there was but one synagogue in the town.*

Now, if we compare this story with others where Jesus has something to do with a *foreigner*, we shall see that at such times he showed a certain eagerness, or

*Edersheim thinks that the synagogue whose remains have been discovered near Tell Hûm is the very one where Jesus preached in Capernaum. Tell Hûm and Khan Minyeh have each been thought to represent the site of Capernaum.

emotion. When he had been talking with the Samaritan woman, he said to the disciples who offered him food, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of!" When the Greeks came to find him at the feast in Jerusalem, he exclaimed, "Now is the Son of Man glorified!" The only time that anything like *anger* is recorded of him was when he drove the money-changers from the Court of the Gentiles in the temple, the place which they had wrongfully usurped.* So, now, at the beginning of his ministry he welcomes this opportunity.

The "elders of the Jews" evidently did not expect the more than cordial answer which they received; for their request is put in phrases which showed that they thought it necessary to *urge* Jesus. "They besought him earnestly, saying, He is worthy that thou shouldst do this for him," etc.

No doubt Jesus was very glad to receive this request; and he must have rejoiced at the sympathy of the "elders" for the Roman, and the friendly relation that evidently existed between the centurion and the Jews. It was a happy moment of hope and encouragement. He made answer instantly and joyfully, "I will come and heal him!"

But the centurion knew that to come into his house would cause Jesus much inconvenience: it would make him "unclean," in the Levitical sense, "until the evening," separating him from other men, and requiring the ablutions prescribed in such a case. It was for this reason that he sent the memorable answer,—*"Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed."*

The dwelling of the centurion was probably a little way out of the town: it seems to have taken a little time to go to it; and some one may have run forward to carry the good news. When Jesus received the message,—either from the lips of the centurion, as Matthew relates, or from friends sent to meet him,—according to the account in Luke, he "marvelled," and said (observe it is the language of strong emotion), "Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel!"

How he must have hoped, and longed, and

thanked God at that moment! After the discouragement at Nazareth he now had an hour when it seemed as if all might come to pass for which he had prayed.

The centurion, it should be noticed, must have often seen Jesus in the synagogue, and heard him preach. So, no doubt, had Matthew; so Jairus, and probably the "little daughter." These we may picture among the congregation.

It was probably soon after this that Jesus crossed the lake, and that the storm arose which so terrified the disciples. This story is told by all three Synoptics,—Matt. viii. 23-27; Mark iv. 36-41; Luke viii. 23-25. Mark's account is the most picturesque, as usual. To him we owe the vivid description: "The waves beat into the boat, inso-much that the boat was now filling. And he himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion [R. V.]: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?"

Jesus had been speaking and preaching in the open air for a large part of the day, and was very tired, so that he slept through the storm. When the disciples awoke him, he arose, and said, "Peace, be still!" The story says that these words were spoken to the waves. But it has been suggested that they were addressed to the frightened disciples, who seem to have been terrified out of their presence of mind. Certainly, the rest of his words are a gentle reproof to them: "Why are ye so fearful? Have ye not yet faith?"

The wind and the sea fell, and there was a great calm. But whether the rebuke of Jesus was addressed to the waves or to the men it is not possible to prove. Without criticising the view that this was one of the miracles of Jesus,—since we know so little of the laws either of the natural or spiritual world, nor how they modify each other,—I yet incline to believe that there was nothing miraculous in this incident. A lake or sea with high mountains close to its shores is always liable to sudden and violent gusts of wind, which fall as suddenly as they rise; and the words of Jesus do not seem to imply the exercise of any exceptional power, while the terror and agitation of the disciples would be likely to bewilder them and to confuse their recollection of the circumstances. Whether the voice of Jesus calmed

* There is one exception to this rule,—the case of the daughter of the Syro-Phœnician woman. We shall consider this later.

the tempest or not, the disciples *thought* that it did so, which shows the feeling with which they regarded him.

L. F. C.

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[Send all matter for this department to Mrs. Henry R. Hallett, 310 Harvard Street, Brookline, Mass.]

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR GIVERS AND RECEIVERS.

1. If you see a book offered in the Book Club which you desire to read, write directly to the address of the person who offers it. If she receives more than one request, the addresses of those to whom she cannot respond may be sent to the Book Club, and the request printed there.

2. If you have a book or paper to give or lend, write directly to the Book Club as above, and offer it with your address.

3. In sending a book, enclose, when possible, a P.O. card for response, already addressed.

4. In thanking the person who has sent you a book, always mention the name of the book. Say, "I have received 'Black Beauty,'" or whatever the book may be; not, "I have received *that book*." This saves a busy person a good deal of time. Otherwise, she must consult her list constantly to find out what book has been received safely.

N.B.—Do not send books to the Book Club. Send only the *offer* to the club. To send the *book* involves packing it *twice* and paying postage *twice*, where once would suffice.

Those who offer books frequently receive notes, saying, "Shall I return you this book, or keep it, or pass it on?" *Unless otherwise stated*, all books offered in this department are *given*, and the postage paid.

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Hallett, asking, "Shall I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it: else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Hallett, saying that you *have* sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed there.

Please write only on one side of the paper in sending lists or letters to the secretary.

A four-pound package is the most that can be sent by *mail*. The postage on four pounds of *magazines* is 16 cts., on four pounds of *books* 32 cts.

Postage on magazines and all periodicals (weighing less than four pounds), 1 cent for four ounces; on bound books, 1 cent for two ounces. *Paper* books are now sent by mail at the same rate as magazines, *when issued periodically*.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in Training the Young," by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.?

Any one who desires "Stepping Heavenward" can address Mrs. Hallett, 310 Harvard street, Brookline, Mass.

A friend also offers through Mrs. Hallett the *Golden Rule*, a Presbyterian periodical, to be sent regularly.

Mrs. George C. Richardson, 408 Lee Street, South Evanston, Illinois, offers the following books: *Ladies' Home Journal* for 1893; "An American Girl in London," Sara Jeannette Duncan; "Diana Carew," Mrs. Forrester; "Mr. Barnes of New York"; "Treasure Island," Robert Louis Stevenson; "Not like Other Girls," "Uncle Max," Rosa N. Carey; "Beatrice," Rider Haggard; "Healy," Jessie Fothergill; "Eric Brighteyes," Rider Haggard. Also a year of the *Galaxy* for 1872. This is old, but contains some very good reading.

Mrs. L. H. Goodwin, Allwood, Amherst County, Virginia, will send "A Tillyloss Scandal" and "Daniel Deronda" to any one who can pay postage.

The Plymouth Branch of the Cheerful Letter Exchange offers the following books. Address Mrs. F. B. Davis, 2 Court Street, Plymouth, Mass. "A Study in Scarlet," Doyle; "Next Door," Clara Burnham; "Christie Johnstone," Reade; "\$10,000 a Year," Warren; "Ralph Wilton's Weird," "At Bay," Mrs. Alexander; "A Marked Man," Ada Cambridge; "Lindsay's Luck," F. H. Bennett; "Armored of Lyonesse," Walter Besant; *Romance*, August, 1893; *Romance*, October, 1894; odd numbers of *Living Age*, *Review of Reviews*, *Scribner's Monthly*, *Harvard Graduates' Magazine*; "Chris," Norris; "Allan Quatermain," Rider Haggard; "A Social Departure," S. J. Duncan; "Lady Grace," Mrs. H. Wood; "The House of the Wolf," Weyman; "Thorpe Regis," F. M. Peard; "Thelma," Marie Corelli; "No Gentleman."

Miss Katharine E. Phelps, 47 Mount Vernon Street, Boston, Mass., offers the following books: "The Heart of Mid-Lothian," Scott; "The Baroness," Frances M. Peard; "Kenilworth," Scott; Bryant's Poems; "Tom Brown's School-days at Rugby," Hughes; Emerson's "Essays"; "When a Man's Single," Barrie; "Rob Roy," Scott.

"John Halifax, Gentleman," and "The Scarlet Letter." Address Mrs. B. R. Vannoy, Bethel, Texas.

Mrs. F. W. Draper, 304 Marlborough Street, Boston, Mass., offers the *Christian Register* for 1892 and 1893; *Harper's Bazar* for 1885, 1886, and 1887; *Youth's Companion* for 1893; "Little Loo," "On the Fo'k'sle Head," "John Holdsworth, Chief Mate," "My Shipmate Louise," W. Clark Russell; "Her Dearest Foe," Mrs. Alexander; "Gold Elsie," Miss Marlitt; "Lorna Doone," Blackmore; "A Little Minx," "A Marked Man," Ada Cambridge; "Widow Bedott Papers," F. M. Whitcher; "Two Years before the Mast," R. H. Dana, Jr.; "Mrs. Fenton," W. E. Norris; "A Costly Freak," Maxwell Gray; "Mrs. Dymond," Miss Thackeray; "Madame de Presnel," E. F. Poynter; "The English Orphans," M. J. Holmes.

These books are offered by Miss A. Von Arnim, Prescott Street, Longwood, Mass.: "Biography of James T. Fields"; "Two of Them," J. M. Barrie; "Maud Muller," illustrated, J. G. Whittier; "The Prelude," Wordsworth; "Love me Little, Love me Long," Charles Reade; "Roses of Shadow," T. R. Sullivan; "Cook's Voyages," J. Barrow; "The Prose Dramas of Ibsen"; "Reindeer, Dogs, and Snow Shoes," a book of explorations, R. J. Bush; "Flower, Fruit, and Thorn Piece," Jean Paul Richter; "The Children's Picture Gallery," a picture book for young children; Miss Austen's Novels, Seaside Edition, paper.

Mrs. F. C. White, Greenville, Washington County, Oregon, writes: "I have several books I will send to any who will pay postage: 'The Talisman,' Scott; 'The Bay of Diamonds,' Fenn; 'Stephen Ellicott's Daughter,' Mrs. J. H. Needell; 'Only a Farmer's Daughter,' L. Herbert Andrews; 'The Touchstone of Peril,' R. E. Forest; 'The Inner Life of the Court of the Tuileries,' Madame Carette; 'Eric Brighteyes,' Rider Haggard."

Miss Eleanor W. Daggett, 116 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Mass., offers the following books: "Memoirs of Jane Welsh Carlyle"; "Oceana," J. A. Froude; "My Neighbor," a Journal of the Episcopal City Mission, 1894; "Frederick the Great," Mühlbach; Fасquellé's "French Course"; "Ele-

mentary French Reader"; "English into French," Sadler; "Leçons Moyennes de la Littérature Française," "Grammaire," Larousse; past numbers of the two following French papers: *La Lecture* and *Les Annales Politique et Littéraires*; English school books; "Ten Times One is Ten," E. E. Hale; "Silence of Dean Maitland," "The Reproach of Annesly," Maxwell Gray; "St. Elmo"; "Strange Adventures of a House Boat," William Black; "A Crooked Path," Mrs. Alexander; "Robert Elsmere," Mrs. Ward; "The Hardy Norseman," "Derrick Vaughn," Edna Lyall; "The Little Merchant" (for children); "Three Men in a Boat"; "Mary St. John"; "Damen's Ghost"; "Rudder Grangers Abroad"; "The Dusantes"; "The Executor"; back numbers of magazines.

REQUESTS.

Libraries.

Standing requests for libraries from:—

Rev. George H. Taylor, Rocky Ford, Colorado;

Mrs. W. F. James, Bibb, Comanche County, Texas;

Mrs. C. S. Stowell, Magnolia, Boulder County, Colorado;

Rev. Charles Graves, Box 328, Anamosa, Iowa;

Mrs. D. Jayne, Cayuta, Schuyler County, New York;

Mrs. Emma Miner, Lisbon, New Hampshire;

Stephen D. Rhoden, LaPine, Crenshaw County, Alabama.

Mrs. Stowell, Mrs. Jayne, and Mrs. Miner, all need children's books. Mrs. Stowell also asks for books for a mining population (many are educated people). Mr. Graves asks for a Sunday-school and parish library, Mr. Rhoden for an industrial school for colored children.

(If any address is omitted that should be in this list of standing requests, we shall be glad to insert it in the next number.)

I have seen how much *The Cheerful Letter* is doing to brighten life in my own neighborhood. My oldest boy, Oren, fourteen years of age, has earned the money to pay my subscription to *Cheerful Letter*. Now, Sisters, I know you will give me a good old-fashioned Methodist welcome! My second

child is a boy named Ernest, ten years old. My little girl, Ila, is three months old. Books and magazines of any denomination would help beguile the weary hours. I cannot get out much, owing to poor health and other drawbacks. My sister will soon send her subscription to *Cheerful Letter*. In fact, we are living in a *Cheerful Letter* neighborhood. Even the little children are saving their pennies to give to their mothers to become subscribers to *The Cheerful Letter*. Mrs. Nora Beasley, Olympia, Washington.

Some kind friend has sent me a copy of *The Cheerful Letter* for June, 1894. I am very poor and unable to buy books for my children; and, if any one would send me some books suitable for young children, such as the *Wide Awake*, or even school books for beginners, I would be thankful. We live in the mountains, fifty miles from Hot Springs, Arkansas. Have no schools that my children can attend. The nearest is three and a half miles and a mountain to go over without a road. There are several families near me, but we are too poor to employ a teacher. If I had reading matter, especially primers, I would take up a Sunday-school here. Am a Unitarian in belief. Any favors of the kind will be seed sown on good ground. Zara L. Cotton, Mount Ida, Montgomery County, Arkansas.

Will you kindly place me in the way of receiving the following books? "Some Recollections of our Anti-slavery Conflict," Samuel J. May; "An Appeal in Behalf of that Class of Americans called Africans," Lydia Maria Child. I will remit postage. Address Mrs. E. T. Horton, Martinez, Contra Costa County, California.

Mrs. Annie Graham, Greensburg, Kentucky, asks for *Harper's Weekly*, or a few books.

I should like very much to have you send me some books for a cousin of mine, who is about twenty years of age and has had the St. Vitus' dance all his life. His father died when he was very small, his mother is poor. They live in the country; and he very seldom goes anywhere, and has gone to school but very little. He is so nervous that he can only write with a typewriter. He is always writing poetry, and loves to

read poems. So I should like a good book of poems, and any other books you think would be good for him to read. Address Laurie L. Rice, Oakland, Oregon, P.O. Box 42.

Mrs. L. H. Goodwin, Allwood, Amherst County, Virginia, asks for a first book in Physiology and "Outlines of English Literature."

Miss Rena O'Bannen, Olympia, Washington, asks for "Pilgrim's Progress."

Mrs. A. Beck, Box 92, Merchantville, New Jersey, desires the *Youth's Companion* for her children.

I reside in a very isolated portion of Virginia, debarred all social and religious privileges. These formidable drawbacks, in conjunction with the chronic poverty that now exists in all agricultural sections, will assure you of the many denials I am subjected to. Our winters are long, dreary, and cheerless, indeed, without something to brighten the monotony. I trust my wishes for some reading matter may appeal to the kindness of *The Cheerful Letter* readers. Any reading in the way of fiction, travels, and magazines will ever prove a great enjoyment. Mrs. Rosalie Smith, Terryville, Virginia.

I would like any papers, monthlies, weeklies, or any kind of reading. If not asking too much, would ask for stories for children, as there are two here—one eleven, and one eight—who delight in reading, as they are shut in as well as myself. Mrs. F. C. White, Greenville, Washington County, Oregon.

I have just become a subscriber to *The Cheerful Letter*, and would like something interesting and instructive for a boy of fifteen and a little girl of nine years. Mrs. Mary C. Dwyer, 1224 Eighth Street, Olympia, Washington.

I have already proved the kindness of your club, and would trespass further if you will permit. I wish very much for a Cruden's Concordance, being a very earnest Bible student and also a busy mother. I wish to save time by its use. I am not at present able to afford one. It matters not how shabby or worn it may be. Mrs. C. Webber, Burr, Otoe County, Nebraska.

Mrs. M. M. Wormack, Farmville, Virginia, writes: "I have just seen a friend of mine who gave me a copy of *The Cheerful Letter*, and who told me of the many valuable books and periodicals you have sent her. She derived so much pleasure from them that I concluded to ask for something to read myself. I live in the country, and often am lonely, and long for pleasant books. Will be thankful for anything *pure* and good; and, in the way of periodicals, will be especially glad to have the *Home Journal* or *Youth's Companion*, if you can send either, and a cooking book, just as you may have any of these to spare. I have a little grandson living with me who will have so many lonely days in the long winter. I will be exceedingly grateful for any *little* child's book or game.

We live farther in the woods than any other *Cheerful Letter* correspondent in Thurston County. I can never sufficiently thank the one who told me there was a chance of my getting reading through the *Cheerful Letter* Exchange. I shall be much alone, as my husband will be off seeking work. I will have to depend on reading as my only company. I will ever make it a part of my missionary work to get others interested in this noble work. I shall send my portion to others as soon as we read them. Mrs. W. H. Kirbey, Olympia, Washington.

Should any one have an occasional number of *Scribner's* or *Harper's*, I would be very glad to receive it. Address Mrs. G. E. Goff, Madeira, Ohio, Box 43.

Mrs. Frank Smith, Manset, Maine, asks for good reading matter.

Mrs. Clara A. Hill, Nesbit, Nebraska, asks for reading matter for herself and others in the frontier country.

Mrs. Hattie Myers, Olympia, Washington, Central Street, 810, writes: "I am the mother of six children. As I have only three with me, I only ask reading for them and myself. Frank is twenty, Charlie thirteen, and Mary ten. Books, magazines, etc., anything that can be spared,—I shall be grateful, how grateful you cannot know until you are shut off from all libraries, and too poor to buy literature."

Mrs. L. C. Beach, Lenox, Iowa, writes of her appreciation of the work of *The Cheerful Letter*, and expresses thanks for books received. She has six grandchildren from six to seventeen,—the oldest a boy. Any reading that would aid in instructing and interesting children would be appreciated. They would like "The Boyhood of Franklin," and also a dictionary. She has received several copies of Unitarian sermons and the *Unitarian*, which she has enjoyed, and will be glad to receive occasionally.

"Millennium Dawn for Bible Students" is asked for by Mrs. A. J. Witt, Portersville, Tulare County, California.

Mrs. Nannie Bailey, Rough Creek, Virginia, asks for the following school books: Bingham's "Latin Grammar"; Tracy's "Physiology"; Venable's "Elementary Arithmetic"; Holmes's "Elementary Speller"; and three tablets.

Mrs. B. R. Vannoy, Bethel, Texas, writes: "Will you kindly send me some books for my children to read, as their educational advantages have been very limited? They are fond of all kinds of books, but would like the histories of England, France, and Germany, and Life of Oliver Cromwell. We live twenty-one miles from a railroad, and have few pleasures."

I am passionately fond of books, but cannot afford to buy them, as I have six little children to care for. Address Mrs. M. Hovie, Landstad, Wisconsin.

Miss Grace Stewart, Galt, Florida, is a partial shut-in and an orphan. She is nineteen years old, and has been obliged to give up study on account of failing health. She is anxious to receive any of E. P. Roe's and Augusta Evans's works.

Mrs. A. M. Stranman, Cleveland, Minnesota, asks for a history of France.

A kind friend sends me *Cheerful Letter*. I would like so very much to get some magazines called *Something to Read*, edited by Edwin J. Brett, also *Young Ladies' Journal*, I do not care how old, just so I can read them. I am not able to get reading, and do love good magazines, such as *Peterson's* and *Family Library*, also good novels. I would like to ask for a good school speaker for a poor boy of sixteen, Henry Hills, Bentonsport, Iowa. He would be so glad of a book

on shorthand. Please send some good novels to Mrs. H. J. Quaintance, Bentonsport, Iowa. She would like an old book called "The Shady Side." Mrs. Mary Spellman, Bentonsport, Iowa.

I wish to return my sincere thanks to the kind one who continues to send me *The Cheerful Letter*, also all of the readers of the same who have sent me books and magazines without any address on them, so that I could not acknowledge the same. There is some one in particular who has sent three books at a time once or twice who puts the initials "G. A. V." on outside of package. It is a great privilege to have good books to read. Will the readers of *Cheerful Letter* please accept my heartfelt thanks? Mrs. E. F. Carney, 205 Hanover Street, Manchester, New Hampshire.

Mrs. Elida E. Durain, Medford, Oklahoma, L. County, would be glad of reading for herself and children.

For a long time I have wanted to write to some one and express my thanks for *The Cheerful Letter*, and also for the *Ladies' Home Journal*, which I receive each month, but do not know who sends them to me. I have a few old magazines and papers I should be glad for some one to have. Very gratefully yours, Addie Hyatt, Norwalk, Connecticut.

I should very much like to have some floral reading matter sent to my mother, Mrs. N. W. Holt, University P.O., Los Angeles County, California. She is nearly seventy years of age, but enjoys her plants and all reading matter relating to them. Any papers, magazines, or books treating almost exclusively of plants rare or beautiful will be appreciated, and read with interest. She takes *Park's Magazine*. I have seen no offer of this kind in the *Letter*, but think that many may be subscribing for just such reading matter, only have not thought of its acceptability to many ladies who are not strong or well. No matter if the magazines are not recent; old ones are very interesting, too. She is especially interested in bulbous plants and cacti. (Miss) Eva N. Holt.

I shall soon be restored to perfect health, after long, hopeless years of suffering and misery. I am studying "Science and Health, with Key to the Scriptures," and, conse-

quently, am not inclined to give much thought to a great amount of miscellaneous reading, and wish to ask you if you would kindly transfer your good will to a lady invalid in California, who, in turn, distributes it among lonely shepherds, ranchmen, and sailors. In fact, they come to her, and beg for something to read. The only magazine I should like to read is the *Arena*, which contains much in general that is of great interest to me. I am intending to learn photography as a means of livelihood, and have been thinking how I could manage to get a good small camera, and at last came upon the idea of an exchange. All the articles I offer are in good condition, and include a McIntosh (Faradie?) Battery, a 5x7 wall-tent, a cheap, complete set of Dickens's works, one or more gilt "friendship ladders," a xylophone, and some other minor things. I would exchange some of the above articles for a genuine Oxford Bible. I hereby improve the opportunity of tendering to you all my heartfelt gratitude for your many esteemed favors, blessings bringing sunshine and good cheer. Albert C. Braband, 1525 9th Street, Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

Mrs. Louisa M. Stevenson, South Cabot, Vermont, asks for a large, unabridged dictionary, as good as Webster's. She says "A book of Talmage's sermons would be a great boon. I like what I have seen of them, so much life and truth. A good Bible Dictionary would be very handy many time. I think it would help to make things more plain, if as good as I have been told about; but I fear it would be asking so much for me to have either of the above. Also the lives of any of the Presidents of United States would be very acceptable. I have seen Life of Andrew Jackson, but not of the others. If I could have any I have spoken of, my preference would be in the order I have written."

Mr. Barry C. Hawkins writes that his address has been changed (from Horse Cove) to Highlands, Macon County, Georgia, the former post-office being discontinued. He would be thankful for a common school geography, and would also be very thankful for any works on physical geography.

Mrs. Mary B. Keech, Calmar, Iowa, would be glad to know who is sending her the

Ladies' Home Journal. It is joyfully received, and cheerfully read by herself and others.

Mrs. Martha Geisy, Olympia, Washington, asks for a modern spelling-book; "The Adventures of a Portuguese Family on the Amazon," Captain Mayne Reid; Harper's School Geography; "Fere's Lessons in English," Welsh. I should feel grateful for the above books to keep my children steady at school. I live far in the country; am a subscriber to *The Cheerful Letter*.

Mrs. Mary David, Huntley, Nebraska, would like to receive back numbers of the *New York Ledger*.

Mrs. John Morgan (formerly of Dunlor, Washington) sends her present address: it is Lacome, Alberta, Canada. She would be glad to receive letters. Has missed her mail and her *Cheerful Letter*.

Miss F. A. Langley, West Levant, Maine, asks for a dictionary, and a Bible in good print.

Mrs. J. J. Hardin's address is changed from Huntley, Nebraska, to Pattonsburg, Missouri.

Mrs. Ida Latson, Olympia, Washington, asks for any of Mrs. Gaskell's works (except "Wives and Daughters") and any of E. P. Roe's books. Also the *Cottage Hearth* (after reading it). Her eldest son asks for Wood's "Natural History." Mrs. Latson also asks for "The Old Ma'am'selle's Secret" and "Little Lord Fauntleroy"; and a music book on the organ. (The last request we may have misunderstood.)

Mrs. M. S. Sibley, Box 296, Columbus, Kansas, asks for any of the following magazines: *Scribner's*, *Harper's*, *Atlantic*, *Century*; also the *Outlook*, as they come out. Would like to receive "Marcella," Mrs. Humphry Ward; "Philip and his Wife," Mrs. Deland; or "The Master of the Mine," Buchanan.

I can but feel that the hand of Providence is in this *Cheerful Letter* movement. Oh, the many homes it has brightened on this Pacific Coast! I live on the Chelahis River, thirty-five miles from Olympia. My three children, Urah and May and Roy, my nine-year-old boy, have to row themselves to school in a boat. No churches near us. At times human life would seem intolerable

without something to read. Kind sisters, you would like to walk in the woods and hear the wind in the dead leaves; but you would still wish for something to read that would tell of the outside world. I believe the opportunity will come to every human being that God has made to have a chance through the *Cheerful Letter* Exchange of something to read. I would like for my eldest girl, Urah, who is twelve, to get a History of the United States. She is fond of reading good books. Magazines and papers would find a hearty welcome with us. I should like "Stepping Heavenward," "Light out of Darkness," "Black Beauty," and "Gentle Measures in Training the Young." I shall certainly do all in my power to get others interested in this noble work. Yours truly, Mrs. Lena Strong, Cedarville P.O., Thurston County, Washington.

I would like to thank, through the columns of dear *Cheerful Letter*, all those who have remembered me with reading and letters. I have answered some that have sent reading, when I could tell where it was from. None but an invalid and a "shut-in" can tell the pleasure it is to receive tokens from the outer world. I want to tell you how much we (husband, children, and self) enjoy *Cheerful Letter*. There is not a word in it but is read eagerly by us all. May God prosper you in your good work. Your sister in Christ, Mrs. Solomon A. Day, Trenton, Nebraska.

I have received a good many books, but not enough of any one to adopt in the school. So I kept a few for the school's library, and distributed the others among the different classes as far as they would go. For the library, I took "Black Beauty," "Swiss Family Robinson," "Robinson Crusoe," and a few others. I am glad of any good book for the library. The following are the most needed among the students, as they are not able to buy books: "Graded Lessons in English," "Practical Lessons in English," Mary F. Hyde; Maury's "Geography" and "The World we live in," Barnes's "History of the United States," Tracy's "Physiology," "Common School Arithmetic" by Sanford or by Wentworth; Sanford's "Intermediate Atlas." A book on good morals and gentle manners is

needed. The books that I asked for in *The Cheerful Letter* have not been received as yet. Please send any books you think will be a help. I received three nice little books yesterday morning: "Talk about Soil," "The Weather," and "Use of Plants." Stephen D. Rhoden, La Pine, Alabama.

If you know of any one who will send me *Popular Science Monthly*, or the *Arena*, I should be very glad and grateful. I suppose all who take the *New World* preserve it. There may be those who need other things more; but I think there are none who want reading more, or who can be more gratefully yours. Mrs. Annie G. Brown, Pleasant River, Nova Scotia.

Mrs. S. A. Bliss, Cambria, Michigan, writes: "You ask what kind of reading I prefer. A variety pleases me, anything that is good. Reading helps to pass the weary hours at night. I can only lie in one position, and do not sleep much: three to five hours during the twenty-four is the most. I do not know who sends me *The Cheerful Letter*, but I do know it is a dear little welcome guest."

The editor asks for a copy of the *Mother's Nursery Guide*. Will any one who has a copy to send monthly, as it comes out, write to her for the address of a mother who would be glad to receive it? Also back numbers of the same periodical.

I have not received "Hymns of the Ages," second series, but should be glad to do so. I very much desire Wood's "Natural History," but fear I may be asking too much, I am very glad that I have been made acquainted with the Cheerful Letter Society. I should be glad to send Gen. Lew Wallace's "Fair God," and "A Social Departure," "How Theodocia and I went round the World by Ourselves," by Sarah Jeanette Duncan, to any one who can afford to pay postage. I pass along such good reading matter as comes to me to others, and that is all that I can afford to do. Gratefully yours, M. A. Dickerman, Barnes, Washington County, Kansas. Care of A. Ballard.

Mrs. M. E. Oades, Olympia, Washington, has not received Keble's "Christian Year," for which she asked. She would like "Robert Elsmere," "A Child's History of

the United States," a primer for her little girl, "Light out of Darkness," or any books on liberal religion, or anything to benefit her mind and relieve the monotony of a dull life. She would like a few copies of "Spirit and Letter" to send among her Southern friends.

Mrs. D. B. Peach, Franklin, Tennessee, has not received "Heartsease," nor any of Gen. Wallace's works, but would be so glad of any of them. She enjoys good novels, history, travels, and tales of adventure. If not asking too much, she would like to receive a good map.

W. H. Thrasher, Jenison, Michigan, has not received "Dred," and would be glad to have it. He is fond of history or any good reading, and has some good books which he would be glad to send and to pay postage on them.

Mrs. Ella Hundley, Olympia, Washington, is very thankful for "The Young Folks' History of the United States." She enjoys any good instructive reading, especially history, biography, travels, and scientific books.

Mrs. M. L. Williams, Godwin, North Carolina, would be glad to have "The House of Seven Gables." She enjoys Rosa N. Carey's books. Has read "Our Bessie," "Merle's Crusade," and "A Search for Basil Lyndhurst." She would like *Harper's Magazine* or *Bazar*.

Won't you please mention mamma's name in *The Cheerful Letter*? She is a helpless Shut-in: perhaps some one would write to her. She is often so very sad, and suffers so much. A kind letter might help her. Her address is Mrs. E. Jones, Alexander City, Alabama.

(We have had several letters from Mrs. Jones. Are not some of our friends writing to her?)

The editor would be glad to know who of our *Cheerful Letter* friends are now corresponding with Mrs. Harriet Clarno, who has had a new misfortune this autumn in the accident to one of her sons (Benny, ten years old, whose leg was broken in two places,—a log falling on it).

Also, who are corresponding with the Nebraska friends who have suffered so

much from the burning heat of last summer and the loss of harvests.

I take this method to inform my friends that I am no longer in the barren land of Southern Nebraska. There is food here for man and beast; but I fear we shall not have good health here, as we did in Nebraska. It seems so low and damp, and we can hardly get a breath of pure fresh air. We are so near the railroad, and there is so much coal dust. I am with dear friends, and my children are where they can go to school at last; and there are three church buildings here, and all have Sunday-school every Sunday. But with all these blessings I miss my dear *Cheerful Letter* friends that made me so happy out West, and I shall not feel quite at home till I hear from some of them. I wish to thank those of you that have so kindly furnished me with books. I would thank some one for a late number of *Cheerful Letter*. I will try to get some subscribers here. With love to all the dear friends, I am, as ever, an interested friend, and glad of any good books suitable for poor people; for there are plenty of them here, and I am still one amongst them, and want to do all I can to help them. Mrs. J. J. Hardin, Pattonsburg, Missouri.

A GOOD BOOK.

We come this month to the authors of fiction. And, first and foremost, we will mention Lynde Palmer, whose books stand at the very head in this class of literature. The five which make up one set are "Drifting and Steering," "One Day's Weaving," "John-Jack," "Archie's Shadow," "Jeanette's Sisters." They are normally intended for young people from fifteen to eighteen years old, and were evidently written as tales for Sunday-school libraries; but they can hardly fail to be interesting to people of all ages. They are written in so bright and entertaining a style that they have an irresistible charm for the young, while the moral and religious lessons they are intended to inculcate are so woven with the story that it is impossible to assimilate the one without the other. The writer of this article has tried the effect of these stories upon people of different ages, tastes, and degrees of culture; and they were

enjoyed equally by all. A copy of "One Day's Weaving," was lent to a young shop-girl of average intelligence, who read it through five times in succession. "Archie's Shadow" was brought home for examination by a Sunday-school teacher, and read with equal enjoyment by a lady who usually reads only books in a line of special study, and an elderly minister, one person declaring it the best novel she had read for a long time. Young girls who have too little education to care for reading in general will read these books with avidity. It is unfortunately impossible to give any quotation which will convey a good idea of any one of these books, yet we have chosen one merely as an example of the style of the writer. All of the best passages are so interwoven with the story that they cannot be extracted.

These books may be procured at the Congregational House, Beacon Street, Boston.

Christie had spent the morning in the hot kitchen, baking.

She had just finished. A pot of nice little cakes had been carried to the cellar, and a beautiful, crisp apple-pie was cooling on the back stoop. This she had made for her father: he was fond of apple-pies, and he had so little to please him now. Besides, the apples grew on their own tree; and he could enjoy it without worrying about the expense. It had been a good morning's work, she thought, as she went to throw herself on the sofa in the darkened room for a minute's rest. But hardly was she settled, when the door opened, and the small girl put in her head.

"Miss Christie, here's them Dawses wot goes to sewin' school, and they wants to see you uncommon bad."

Christie sighed like a furnace. "Those horrid little Daws!" Then she laughed a little. "Get up, you lazy, good-for-nothing girl," she cried. "Here's your chance." . . . Christie gave them plenty of bread and butter; and when the hungry, sniffing little noses seemed to discover something still more fascinating in the air, she could not help taking the hint. Down cellar and up again went the tired feet, and soon each little Daw was finding how delightfully life and gingerbread go down together.

Christie, in a glow of self-approval, went

back to her sofa, only to be again disturbed in two minutes more. This time the door flew open to present an apparition of John-Jack with both hands raised. He simply ejaculated, "Cousin!" in the deepest agitation, and vanished as suddenly as he came.

"It must be a tragedy this time," cried Christie, rushing out to the back stoop. Alas! yes. There, with many ohs! and ahs! stood John-Jack and the small girl, mournfully contemplating the ruins of Christie's beautiful pie. There was nothing left but the bottom crust and a fraction of a rim.

"Them horrid little Dawses"—began the small girl.

"Have scooped it with their paws!" finished Christie, solemnly. It was really too dreadful to smile. The ungrateful little wretches! Only to think how patiently she had taught them,—all the ten commandments, and such delightful little hymns, too. Hark! didn't she hear them singing that very minute?

She ran to the fence. Yes, there they were upon the front door-steps, looking delightfully innocent, and singing,—could it be possible?—they had been singing "Come to Jesus;" and, with faith too deep to be disturbed by any little consciousness of human weakness, they were now going on in shrill chorus to the next verse, "Jesus loves you! Jesus loves you!"

Christie, with some difficulty restraining John-Jack, whose zeal inclined him to vigorous pursuit, went back quite discomfited to her sofa.

"Real life is so very different from the way it is in stories," she said. "Now, if I had been writing a Sunday-school book about a girl who had worked as I have, and gone to sewing-school so many weary days,—had so long

'Sat on a stile,

And continued to smile

To soften the heart of those Daws'—

I should begin to give her a reward. I should have had the good seed springing up by this time, and all the little Daws setting beautiful examples to the oldest church members."

She drew a letter from her pocket, received the day before from Tom.

"Whenever I hear or read anything good," he had written, "I want to run straight and

tell *you*. Now here is something, Christie, that seems to make that little matter of *choosing* clearer. I want to copy it for you, word for word.

"Through the susceptibilities, the passivities, the movement from without inward, we have pleasure; through the activities, the choices, the volitions, the movement from within outward, we have joy, happiness, blessedness. And as these forms of good are different in their origin, so are they in their quality. By the one we are allied to the animals, by the other to the angels. For the one we are dependent upon circumstances, for the other upon *choice*."

"Do you understand it, Christie? I suppose what comes to us from 'without inward' is everything we *receive*,—pleasant sights and sounds, our food, etc. All this pleasure we share with the animals. But when, with the movement from within *outward*, we choose the happiness and well-being of another,—choose to do good,—then this is what we *give*. This is our angel-side,—the God-side; and of course the happiness that comes from this choosing must be infinitely higher. This is why it is more blessed to give than to receive. And this happiness does not depend upon circumstances, you know: the poorest, humblest person has it in his own *choice*."

"All very clear in theory," sighed Christie, folding the letter. "I should like to choose the side allied to the angels, but I can't keep myself up to such a pitch all the time. Now, a thoroughly good person would choose to go up and see that Mrs. Barnes, I suppose. The little Daws said she was worse, and the baby crying almost all the time. I might take up a little milk; but it is so *very* hot.

"There, that will do," she cried indignantly, in a few minutes. "The old Christie is worse than the Daws: how can she ever think of taking her little fellow-servants by the throat? She shall go this very afternoon."—*John-Jack, by Lynde Palmer.*

Offers of good standard reading for our Western libraries are much needed: Scott, Dickens, Miss Yonge, Geo. MacDonald, Miss Thackeray, etc., for young people; Dr. E. E. Hale's books, Mrs. Ewing's, etc. Can we not each give one good book this winter to a library? The new History of United States by Fiske is especially valuable.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

THE PLACE OF THE STORY IN EARLY EDUCATION.

The place of the story in early education has a value, I think, that can hardly be overestimated. It would seem to be the earliest and simplest form of instruction to childish or undeveloped minds, especially moral or religious instruction. The story need not be a fictitious one. The child likes a "real true one" quite as well as a "made-up one." Children never relish being "preached to" (I know I didn't, as a child), while the lesson intended to be conveyed may be made both palatable and impressive under the guise of a story, and the moral be understood even if it be not pointed out too directly.

Say to the boy: "It is wrong to tell a lie. It is wicked, and God is angry with the wicked," and the boy refrains perhaps, under provocation, to be untrue, because he fears the eye of the "angry God who watches all his actions." But read to him the story of the "Father of his Country" hacking down the little cherry-tree, and then, hatchet in hand, standing bravely before his irate father with the immortal exclamation, "I cannot tell a lie," and the next time the little fellow is tempted to a falsehood the image of the dauntless young lad will rise up before him, and he, too, will scorn a lie. No matter if the story now is doubted and is fast becoming a "myth," it ought to be true if it isn't, and be handed down to coming generations.

I sometimes think it is a pity to lay sacrilegious hands upon all these old-time stories that have delighted the childish mind for ages. Suppose there *were* no "William Tell." What childish mind was ever hurt by believing in the father's patriotism and the boy's trusting faith in his father's unerring aim at the apple upon his head? This, too, may be a "myth," but children will always believe in its truth; and so of the old Bible stories. They have a never-failing charm for children, and I hope the "Higher Criticism" will not refine them all away or make them seem so old-fashioned and doubtful that the next generation will cease to read them or know anything about them at all. Perhaps, though, with a better understanding of their true place and value,

they may love and appreciate them better still.

When one contrasts the wonderful improvement that has been made in childish literature, now that the best talent of author and artist are combined to make book and magazine, from *Babyland* to *St. Nicholas*, attractive at once to eye and mind, and even the school books really works of art, with the old-time dull books of our fathers and mothers and even of our early days, one can understand the feeling of the old lady who had grown up in a family where "Tanglewood Tales" would have been tabooed, but, having been obliged to read to a very lively little grand-niece, had made acquaintance with modern childish reading, to her great amazement. Looking up through her glasses not long ago, she said: "I've learned more about books the last four years than I have in my whole life before. I have read 'Robinson Crusoe,' 'Alice in Wonderland,' 'The Back of the North Wind,' 'Water Babies,' 'Tanglewood Tales,' 'Stories of the Greek Heroes,' for the first time after I was sixty years old! How I wish I had been born yesterday! No matter how hard I read I can never catch up now!"

The road to knowledge seems so much more alluring now, in spite of the old adage, that there is no "royal road" thereto; but, ignorant of the "glories to be revealed," we sat down contented to our "Peter Parley's," and read, of a Sunday, the good little books about pious children, with remarkable spiritual experiences, who, frail of body, but precocious in mind, early folded their little hands and slipped away from earth to more congenial climes; and sometimes, alas! of naughty children,—to whom, perhaps, from force of our "innate depravity" we felt more drawn,—who were led into forbidden ways, and fell into direful straits, and were held up for our warning. And think of the long "Puritanical Sundays," enlivened by such cheerful reading as the New England Primer, with its wonderful illustrations, about "Adam's fall, wherein we sinned all," and the martyr Rogers enclosed in fagots, surrounded by his weeping wife and children; and the "Shorter Catechism" to which these were the prelude; and that volume of horrors, Fox's "Book of Martyrs." I wonder what one of

our young children nowadays would think to be fed on such diet! What a revelation one of Jules Verne's books would have been to some wearied boy in those days!

Miss Alcott's stories have charmed and delighted so many young people, and at the same time instilled in a quiet, perhaps unnoticed, way many a lesson of sweetness and piety; and her "Little Men and Women" have become familiar friends in many homes.

Mrs. Ewing's lovely stories, "The Short Life," "Daddy Darwin's Dovecot," and Mrs. Kate Douglass Wiggin's "The Birds' Christmas Carol" and "Timothy's Quest," appeal to the highest elements in the child's nature, and are books which every Christian mother is glad to put into her children's hands for quiet Sunday afternoons. "In His Name" and "Miss Toosey's Mission," "Stories from Dickens," and Hawthorne's "Great Stone Face," always meet with juvenile favor; while Hans Christian Andersen, the "prince of fairy-story tellers," furnishes us with many exquisitely conceived stories. Ruskin's "King of the Golden River" won for him many friends among the little folk.

George MacDonald has a rare gift in the writing of fairy tales. The longest and best known are the "Back of the North Wind," "The Princess and Goblins," "The Princess and Curdie," and "The Golden Key." Some of these are more attractive in form than allegories, and are full of moral lessons that are so artistically woven into the fabric of the writing that they make their way to the heart unawares.

I think more caution should be exercised now about *what* young children read. If books and papers are left carelessly about, as they are apt to be in these busy days, the small child sometimes gets hold of something it had better not see. I was very much surprised a short time ago at a little friend of mine who got hold of a sensational story in one of our daily papers, and rehearsed it with much gusto to her astonished father, who had no idea of her reading it at all; and our daily papers are fuller of such things than is good for the mature mind, to say nothing of a child of nine. And the dime novel and the wild Indian tales, with their pernicious influence, steal in before we are aware. Eternal vigilance is the price of more things than liberty.

If good, pure, and attractive reading is put within the reach of our young people, they will not desire trashy literature; and, the taste once acquired for wholesome and instructive reading, there is not much danger of its being perverted in after years.

E. L. R.

This is a gloomy, blustery day,—snowing and sleeting by turns,—yet I am feeling better than is usual for me. There is a good fire in the grate, thanks to the Society of St. Andrew's. My pains and aches have taken a day off, either to rest or help give a tug at the heart-strings of some other poor sufferer. My eyes, that have been out of order for the past six weeks, are again of use; and I have been reading a new novel ("The Prelate"), sent to me some time ago by Mrs. Jones of Newburyport, Mass., thanks to *The Cheerful Letter*. Don't you think I am blessed enough for one day? I would be still happier, could I share with some other brother or sister; and that brings me to what I wanted to offer. I am receiving *Harper's Weekly*. If any shut-in or other needy or sick person will send me stamps and address, I will forward the paper to him on the same day I receive it. I would also like to send my copy of *The Cheerful Letter* and *Open Window*. I have been giving them to a neighbor, but she has gone where all things are known except suffering.

I received "The Life of Oliver Cromwell" and "The Monastery," by Scott. Many thanks. *The Cheerful Letter* is a delightful publication. The November number, just received, is fat with good things. I hope the defence of fairy stories will be vigorous. This would be a dry old earth if we had no dreamland. With a prayer that all suffering ones may regain health and strength, and that the kind ones who are the promoters and workers in publishing *The Cheerful Letter*, and all members of the Book Exchange Club, may have health and all good things, I am, yours gratefully, Wm. Shipyard, 331 Court Street, Charleston, West Virginia.

To reach the regions of light, you must pass through the clouds: some stop there, others know how to go beyond.—*Joseph Joubert*.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

There will be a meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange on the first Friday in January at 25 Beacon Street at 10.30 A.M.

Our Book Club department has grown so large that we shall ask of all who, in the future, write to us for books, to send the name of some minister, as a reference; when possible, the minister of the church to which they belong.

Want of space obliges us to decline offers of original verses.

We frequently receive letters asking for pecuniary aid or its equivalent. To give such help as this is out of our power, and would alter the character of our society. In future, when such appeals are made to us, we shall endeavor to send the address of the writer to some one living in the same town, as a personal visit is the best means of meeting cases of actual necessity.

Please observe that our Treasurer's address is changed from Linden Place, Brookline, to No. 53 Linden Street, Brookline.

If you receive requests for money, it is best not to respond, but to send the name of the person who asks to Miss Langmaid or Miss Clarke.

We should be very glad to have some of our correspondents occasionally respond to requests, as well as offer books. Many of our shut-ins are too late to receive the book for which they ask.

Will our correspondents remember that we cannot promise to print letters written on both sides of the paper, nor those written in pencil. All such letters must be copied before being printed, and we cannot undertake to do this.

There is a fifty cent edition of Harriet Martineau's exquisite little story of "Crofton Boys." It is sold by W. B. Clarke, Boston. Very good books are to be obtained at De Wolfe & Fiske's in twenty-five cent editions.

The secretary of the Book Club asks that those who send books to correspondents would be kind enough to inform her of what is sent and to whom. If the givers of books are willing to comply with this request, it will assist her materially, and save her much trouble. If, for instance, you see a request for reading in *The Cheerful Letter*, and begin a correspondence with the writer, and send her books or even boxes of books, Mrs. Hallett has no means of knowing this, unless you inform her; and the next writer may receive no answer. Yet she cannot tell which of the two to recommend. If Mrs. Smith receives fifty books in six months, and Mrs. Jones only two, Mrs. Hallett would rather recommend Mrs. Jones to those who offer books; but, unless givers will help us by sending a report, many of those who need books will remain unsupplied, especially those who are too scrupulous to repeat their request.

MISCELLANEOUS.

SECRETARY OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE, —Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.

TREASURER OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE, —Miss Louise Howe, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., or 53 Linden Street, Brookline, Mass.

EDITOR OF "CHEERFUL LETTER," —Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

SECRETARY OF BOOK CLUB OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE, —Mrs. Henry R. Hallett, 310 Harvard Street, Brookline, Mass.

Subscriptions and renewals may be sent to the treasurer as above. The subscription is fifty cents a year.

Notice that requests for membership and for correspondents go to Miss Langmaid, our secretary; requests for books and offers of books, to Mrs. Hallett; and to Miss Clarke only articles for insertion in the paper (not Book Club matter). All such material should be written on *one side only* of the paper, and sent by the first of the month *before* that in which it is printed.

Those not able to subscribe for the paper, but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Miss Ellen R. Dewson, Quincy, Mass. Please give full name and address. Many of our members take the paper, in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.

Will all subscribers or receivers of *The Cheerful Letter*, whose copy does not come regularly, or comes not correctly addressed, be kind enough to notify Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.?

Send also all notices of *changes of address* to Miss Langmaid. Please do not send these notices to the editor, as it causes delay in the correction.